THE DICKENSIAN

A Magazine for Dickens Lovers
and Monthly Record of the Dickens Fellowship

VOL. IV. MARCH, 1908. No. 3.

WHEN FOUND—

THE anniversary of the birthday of Charles Dickens was celebrated this year in London by the installation of the National Dickens Library at the Guildhall, a notable event of which the Dickens Fellowship may justly feel proud. It has taken a long time, certainly, to get together the necessary funds for its accomplishment, and even now that the Library is safely housed in the precincts of the Guildhall as a National monument to England's best loved novelist, there is much to be done by way of additions to make it thoroughly worthy of its object. For this purpose a little more money is required, and we sincerely hope that this will be forthcoming from those who have not yet contributed towards the fund already raised.

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As we have frequently pointed out in these pages, the scheme is of National importance, for Dickens is one of our cherished possessions, and some public mark of the esteem and pride we feel in such a heritage should be manifest in this great London of ours with which his name and works are inseparable, and no more fitting monument to his memory could possibly be devised than such a one as the Library now established in the heart of the City he loved so much affords.

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It was an interesting and imposing ceremony at which the Library was handed over to the City, and a huge company of admirers of the novelist assembled in the Guildhall Library to take part in it. Lord James of Hereford, on behalf of the Dickens Fellowship and the other subscribers to the fund, presented the Library, and the Right Hon. the Lord Mayor of London accepted it on behalf of the Corporation. Notable representatives of all professions were present, indicating if need be, the remarkable way that Dickens's works appeal to every phase and grade of thought. A full report of the proceedings will be found on another page.

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Throughout the world the anniversary of the birthday of Dickens was celebrated in various ways, and thousands of admirers assembled to do homage to the memory of the master-mind which still retains the love and memory of all English-speaking races, and many other nationalities. Reference only to our pages this month will testify to what extent this obtains, and when one thinks that the Dickens centenary is scarcely four years off, all this augurs well for the celebration of this notable event.

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On the 15th of last month were published the two volumes of *Miscellaneous Papers*, by Dickens, collected from *The Examiner*,

Household Words, All the Year Round, and other sources, most of which are identified as the work of the novelist for the first time. We hope to publish an article on these in our next issue from the pen of Mr. A. J. Philip, Librarian of the Gravesend Free Library. On March 4th, the Editor of this magazine will deliver a lecture on them at Essex Hall, Essex Street, Strand, at 8 o'clock. Members of the Fellowship will be admitted on presenting their membership cards, and the general public on the payment of sixpence.

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The council of the Dickens Fellowship wish to encourage the formation of more branches in this country, including the London suburbs, and the Hon. Secretary would be glad to hear from any one willing to help in bringing this about. Every assistance will be given from Headquarters, and every facility granted to those undertaking the initial work entailed in their formation.

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A large circle of friends bade Mr. Frank Speaight "Godspeed" at Euston on Saturday, February 1st, on his third trip to America and Canada. On this occasion it is more than probable his visit will be extended to British Columbia and to Australia. Mr. Speaight's agents in America have made the latter proposal quite possible, and, if arrangements can be made, we shall not see him again until October.

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As we get frequent demands for short sketches adapted from the works of Dickens suitable for Dickens meetings, we are glad to be able to announce that Mr. G. F. Gadd, a member of the Manchester Branch, has written a short comedietta, entitled "The Mendicant's Bride." It is adapted from *Our Mutual Friend,* and contains only four characters, Reginald Wilfer, Mrs. Wilfer, Lavinia Wilfer, and George Sampson, and would take about twenty minutes in performance. Mr. Gadd is willing to accord right of performance to any branch of the Fellowship, and will send a copy of the comedietta to any member on receipt of sixpence, the cost of duplication. His address is 40, Bamford Road, Didsbury, Manchester.

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We are asked to state that the Dickens Fellowship Dramatic Society will be pleased to consider Dickens plays for production at a London theatre in the late autumn. Full scenario should be addressed to the Hon. Sec., Mr. Walter Dexter, 40, Ommaney Road, New Cross, S.E. Preference will be given to dramatisation of works —or portions—not previously seen on the stage; one-act plays with plenty of action will be specially welcome. The Hon. Secretary will be pleased to hear from readers desiring to join the Society as acting members.

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The *Bookman* for March is an "Edwin Drood" number, and contains a number of interesting illustrations relative to the book and its solutions. An excellent portrait of Dickens is issued with it as a supplement.

THE EDITOR.

THE NATIONAL DICKENS LIBRARY

INSTALLATION AT THE GUILDHALL

SPEECH BY LORD JAMES OF HEREFORD

A LARGE party of Dickensians gathered at the Guildhall Library, on February 7th, to take part in the interesting ceremony of handing over the National Dickens Library to the City Corporation, for permanent housing there. What this library comprises is too well known to readers of this magazine to need recapitulation here, as is the means by which it was acquired. During the last month donations of books have been made by many publishers, and it is hoped that now it is established, bequests will from time to time be made to it, and so gradually make it a thoroughly worthy monument to the fame of England's best-loved novelist.

The Lord Mayor (Sir John C. Bell), who was accompanied by the Lady Mayoress, presided over the gathering in the Guildhall Library. Supporting his Lordship were Mr. Alderman and Sheriff Burnett and Mr. Sheriff Wakefield, and the large company included:—

Lord James of Hereford, Sir John Hare, Sir Richard Holmes, Sir Felix Schuster, Miss Georgina Hogarth, Mrs. Henry F. Dickens, the Misses Dickens, Lady Ritchie (daughter of W. M. Thackeray), Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M.P., Mr. Percy Fitzgerald, Sir Charles Matthews, Sir George Faudel-Phillips, Sir Vesey Strong, Sir Whittaker Ellis, Mr. Frederic Harrison, Mr. Clement Shorter, Mr. M. H. Spielmann, Mr. J. C. Parkinson, Mr. Deputy Matthew Wallace, Mr. Deputy Millar Wilkinson, Mr. A. Jerrold-Nathan, many other members of the Corporation, and a numerous following from the Dickens Fellowship and the "Boz" Club.

Letters regretting inability to be present were read from the Duke of Argyll, the American Ambassador, Mr. John Morley, Lord Avebury, Mr. Balfour, Mr. Beerbohm Tree, Mr. Justice Darling, and others. To Lord James of Hereford, President of the "Boz" Club and a Vice-president of the Dickens Fellowship, was entrusted the duty of presenting the National Dickens Library to the Corporation.

Lord James of Hereford said it was his happy task to ask the Lord Mayor to accept, on behalf of some of those who had had the privilege of the personal friendship of Dickens, and of many others who were great admirers of that author's works and of the great results he accomplished, a proof of the homage they wished to pay and the admiration they felt for Charles Dickens. They recognised his great literary merit, and they knew with what power he could mirror the lives of men as he saw them; and certainly there was no more faithful depicter of all he heard and saw than Charles Dickens. Indeed, had he been an artist he would have been a pre-Raphaelite. By his power of depiction and his wit he placed before the public reading of a most pleasant character, instructing all in what was the duty of man to man in this world. Dickens effected great work on behalf of his fellow-men, and produced an amount of good such as no English author of late times had done. Throughout all he ever wrote there was not one line that a mother would not wish her daughter to read. They recognized the power he had of

depicting the lives of the people; he made characters that became household words amongst us, representing different degrees of action, thought and conduct. His chief charm was that he wrote with the one object of dealing with that which existed before him as he found it. He knew the difference between what was good in private life and in the State. He warred to defend that which was good, and strove to destroy that which was evil, and the result was that in almost every case he was successful.

The reason of this was that he saw the world as it was; he was proud that he was of the people, and therefore he knew the people. He wrote of the people to the people, and he was appealing to the hearts of men when he was bringing home to their minds a knowledge of the evils against which he fought, and which he remedied. It was because he was successful in that fight that the Dickens Fellowship were offering their treasures to the Corporation. One question was often asked of him (Lord James) which ought to be answered, and that was, What was the work of Dickens that deserved the greatest commendation? He had himself heard Dickens answer that question, and he hoped that when the librarian of the Guildhall was asked from what book of Dickens an inquirer could get the most interest and benefit, he would recommend one particular volume, one very little volume, *A Christmas Carol*. He remembered the publication of that book in the early forties, and had not forgotten the effect it produced on him, and he hoped its lessons would never fail to touch the hearts of all humanity. Dickens, in replying to a correspondent who thanked him for the *Christmas Carol*, wrote: "I have great faith in the poor, and, to the best of my ability, I always endeavour to present them in a favourable light to the rich, and I shall never cease until the day of my death to advocate their being made as happy and wise as their circumstances will permit." They were looking still to the future for the real harvest of Dickens's solid work. As Emerson had said, "The golden age of a nation is ever before, and not behind it." So they believed that, much as the work of Charles Dickens had accomplished, it would accomplish still more in the future, and there would be yet further cause for acknowledging the debt of gratitude which all owed to the man they were hono ring.

The Lord Mayor said that, on behalf of the Corporation, he gladly accepted the very valuable gift from the Dickens Fellowship, knowing full well the object with which it was given. Rich as was their glorious library in the possession of valuable books, it would be distinctly benefited by the accession it had received to-day. How grateful would Dickens be if he knew that so many of the abuses and evils he fought had been remedied by the influence of his books. In accepting the gift, with a heart full of gratitude, he thanked the Dickens Fellowship for selecting the Corporation to be charged with the responsibility and care of this collection of Dickens's works for all time.

Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M.P., said the formation of volumes of newspaper articles and criticisms of the works of our great masters of literature should be encouraged. It was a great reproach to us that

foreign commentators had been more voluminous with regard to our national authors than ourselves. One of the commonest misfortunes of the collector was that the material that appeared of no value to-day was of the utmost importance on the morrow. He was afraid that if it had not been for the late Mr. Kitton, a great deal of the literature with regard to Charles Dickens would have been lost. There was no writer or reformer who had destroyed more evils than Dickens, and when the last evil that he wrote of had died away, over all and above all would remain the transcendent literary genius of the man. And then his humour! There was really only one charac-

THE LORD MAYOR ACCEPTING THE NATIONAL DICKENS LIBRARY ON BEHALF OF THE CITY OF LONDON

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ter ever created who could rival Sancho Panza, and that was Samuel Weller. Apart from his great and generous heart, apart from his love for his fellow-men, and for his country, apart from his hatred of wrong and abuses, and cant and hypocrisy, apart from all these things, there arises the mighty genius of the man of letters. And when the last evil against which he made war has been reformed, when every aim and object of social well-being for which he worked has been realized, when all the abuses which he denounced appear like some half-forgotten nightmare of a dead and irrevocable past, shining brightly will still remain the literary genius of the man. The speaker concluded by moving a resolution expressing satisfaction at the establishment of the nucleus of a national Dickens

Library, and its installation in the heart of that great City which Dickens loved.

Mr. Clement Shorter, in seconding the resolution, which was adopted, spoke in high praise of the unselfish character of the late F. G. Kitton and of his unceasing and loving labour in all that pertained to Dickens and his works.

Mr. Frederic Harrison, moving a vote of thanks to Lord James of Hereford, gave some very interesting reminiscences of his schoolboy time, when he lived near to Dickens when he was writing *Dombey and Son*, exactly sixty years ago.

A vote of thanks to the Lord Mayor was moved by Mr. Percy Fitzgerald, and, in seconding,

Sir John Hare remarked that he thought Dickens's works should be read at home rather than taken as an entertainment on the stage, for Dickens was so great a creator, and impressed his readers so deeply, that no actor could delineate his characters and no dramatic author could tinker with them.

Mr. George Haysom (Chairman of the Library Committee) announced that the new Dickens Library would be placed in a special department.

POETICAL TRIBUTES TO CHARLES DICKENS

XXXIX.

AN ACROSTIC

By W. H. K. Wright, F.L.A.

(President, Plymouth Branch).

COLD is the heart indeed, that warms not at thy honoured name;
Hard and unpitying is the man, who feels no genuine flame
As in his list'ning ears thy happy Christmas tales are told,
Rich in their plain outspoken truth, more precious far than gold:
Love to thy brother, love to all, was thine in richest store,
Else had thy pen ne'er gained such power, alike o'er rich and poor,
Still less had been thy name revered on every British shore.

Dark was the hour and sad, that saw thy brilliant light decay,
In grief we heard the tidings dread on that eventful day:
Can it be true? said we, that he, the great, the master mind;
King of that high and glorious art, that gladdens all mankind,
Extended lies in death's embrace, returned to lifeless dust,
Never to cheer our hearts again, or speak his words of trust,
Sad was that hour, the tale was true, gone was the good and just.

DESULTORY THOUGHTS ON DROOD

By J. CUMING WALTERS

(Author of "Clues to Dickens' Mystery of Edwin Drood")

IS the public, even the enthusiastic Dickens public, weary of controversy on Edwin Drood, or is there some subtle fascination about the insoluble mystery which renders it of perennial interest? I say "insoluble" mystery, because with all our guesses, good or bad, we can never expect to prove conclusively and beyond all further cavil that we have wrested the secret from the heart in which it was conceived, and the chambers of which have been locked by death. Whatever we do is by way of surmise And though I, for one, often feel reluctant to initiate or renew discussion, yet I have reason to believe that there will always be a large number of students and readers to whom speculations on the half-told tale will irresistibly appeal.

I.

There are two reasons for entering on the subject once more—the drama by Mr. Comyns Carr, and the volume by Mr. Edwin Charles.* I took a special interest in Mr. Beerbohm Tree's staging of "Edwin Drood," because I have reason to believe that my own small volume had something to do with suggesting to him the dramatic possibilities of the story. But Mr. Carr pursued an independent course, and it is obvious—in spite of the critics—that his main idea was to produce a good acting piece, not to solve the Dickens problem. Unfortunately he appears to have pleased neither literary nor dramatic taste, and the run of the play has been short. The incident has its moral, and this is the first point I wish to emphasize: there can be no interest, no force, no display of art, no effective climax to the story, if Edwin Drood escapes Jasper and returns in person. The whole fabric tumbles to pieces like a house of badly-arranged cards if Drood be alive, and, being alive, allows Jasper to pursue his malignant course unchecked, allows Rosa Bud to be persecuted, allows Neville Landless to be charged with murder, and allows his friends to bewail him as dead. The plot becomes sheer absurdity if a man who already knows Jasper's wicked designs watches him in elaborate disguise to prove what he has already learned, and in the meantime gives him a chance of perpetrating further crimes. I commend these conclusions to Mr. Andrew Lang, who admits that as a result of Drood's ridiculous escapade as Datchery, Jasper would have to murder Neville Landless in order to come to the doom Dickens designed. Drood's return would be a bungle. The idea too, would not have been new, and would have shown Dickens's paucity of resource, as he would merely have repeated the main theme in *Hunted Down* and *Our Mutual Friend*. Lastly, it is opposed to all statements that he made, and opposed to the spirit of the instructions he conveyed to the artist, Luke Fildes. Surely it is time that the amateurish and unconvincing theory was abandoned. Thanks to Mr. Carr's drama we have had an opportunity of seeing

* "Keys to the Drood Mystery." By Edwin Charles. Illustrated by Edwin Coffin. London: Collier & Co. 1s. net.

how badly it would have worked out, and how disappointed the public would have been.

II.

Edwin Drood was murdered, and his body destroyed by quicklime. So far Mr. Edwin Charles agrees with me, and I agree with him; when we *do* agree, as Mr. Puff would say, our unanimity is wonderful. Of course we do not agree for long; if we did, there would have been no occasion for Mr. Charles's volume. Yet I am very glad Mr. Charles has set forth an alternative theory. He is eminently fair in his pages, and he conveniently summarises all that has previously been written on the subject. He states that he lingered over my Helena Landless theory, and I can return the compliment by stating that I have lingered over his Bazzard theory. The admirable paper by Mr. Willoughby Matchett in a recent number of *The Dickensian* had already led me to reflect anew upon the evidence—for I have a mind perfectly open to conviction.

But I do not like this Bazzard-Datchery idea, and on reconsideration I dislike it more and more. Mr. Matchett and Mr. Charles have advocated the case brilliantly, have not missed a point, and have apparently become possessed of double-magnifying glasses of extra power for the examination of the merest specks. And yet what a hollow case it is! The arguments in its favour are exactly of the character that an ingenious counsel employs at the Old Bailey when he knows that artifice must conceal weakness. It is all very clever, but it has not an atom of substance. I could, if I wished, make out a far better case for Tartar on the same lines as Mr. Matchett and Mr. Charles follow when making out their case for Bazzard.

What they have both failed to perceive at the very outset is, that Dickens, in the course of his story, was continually showing false lights in order to bring unwary voyagers on the rocks. Bazzard was one of these false lights, obviously intended to mislead and to withdraw attention from the path leading to the true goal. I can imagine the author's quiet chuckle as he said to himself, "Now, having introduced this silly and pretentious humbug, Bazzard, and thrown about him an atmosphere of mystery, I will just add that he is 'off duty at present,' and ever'y simpleton will immediately shout, 'Eureka! Datchery is found.'" And so it has come to pass. I have known the most casual and shallow reader of *Edwin Drood* to "jump" at Bazzard, and always for the same reason; he was "off duty at present." If that were Dickens's secret it was not worth having, and if that were his way of disclosing it, it was not worth doing. No! he simply digged a pit (to change the metaphor), and the eager, stumbling multitude conveniently fell into it as he wished. Preciously preserved secrets are not given away so cheaply, nor does an author, who is master of his craft, arrange a mighty denouement in so haphazard a fashion.

This is the first objection to the theory, but others, which I must very briefly set forth, are even more potent:—

(*a*) It is against the canons of art to introduce a *belated* character in order to extricate from difficulty the persons entangled previous

to his appearance. A genuine puzzle must start with all the data set forth. The essential person must be there almost from the first, and not be suddenly precipitated into the story, as a new and hitherto unconsidered factor, ready to intervene in a business with which he had no original interest or connection. Bazzard is "outside" the main plot, and almost an afterthought in the story. Helena Landless is there from the first, with a direct, a vital, and all-absorbing interest in the fate of the characters concerned. In other words, Bazzard did not enter into the original puzzle, therefore he can have nothing to do with the solution. He belongs to the underplot only. He was no crude *deus ex machinâ*, but a bogey, and he splendidly fulfilled Dickens's purpose of throwing the pursuer off the scent.

(*b*) Bazzard is not a serious character, but a burlesque. Grewgious's supposed admiration for talents he did not understand was typical of Dickens's sardonic humour and irony where self-conscious and morbid humbugs were concerned. Bazzard, who had written a drama which no one would bring out, is the twin-brother of Mr. Wopsle, who considered himself the only man fit to act "Hamlet." The parallel in the portrayal of the two men is most striking. Both were vain and opinionated impostors. Neither could be heroic, neither perform a hero's task.

(*c*) Bazzard is a subordinated person in the story, and Dickens therefore could never have intended that he should do a giant's work. If he were Datchery he would have to risk his life hourly. Was Bazzard, eaten up with vanity, egotistical, thinking ever of his rejected play, a likely man to sacrifice himself in the cause of Edwin Drood whom he scarcely knew and in whom he had not a scintalla of interest? The suggestion is preposterous.

And yet on that single phrase, that he is "off duty at present," the colossal theory is founded that Bazzard was Datchery—Datchery who was to watch Jasper the desperado, Datchery who was to avenge Edwin Drood, Datchery who was to devote his hours to gathering every minute particle of evidence for a supreme indictment of a subtle assassin, Datchery who was to vindicate Neville Landless and aid Rosa Bud—Datchery, in short, who was to do everything that a man like Bazzard was hopelessly unfitted to perform, and utterly disinclined to undertake.

III.

So far I have dealt jointly with Mr. Matchett and Mr. Charles; now I have a word to say on the latter alone. In order to eke out the Bazzard theory—and it needs a lot of eking out, and in that respect is so different from the Helena theory which, once started, runs to its close almost without a break—Mr. Charles introduces a touch of the supernatural. Bazzard (as Datchery) must needs have a dream. In that dream he sees the tomb of Mrs. Sapsea with the long-drawn-out and egregious epitaph, and, as he gazes, behold! a spirit hand touches certain letters upon it, and those letters spell "Edwin Drood." Prodigious! But why should the letters not spell "Edwin Drood," or any other name, considering there are so many of them?

By exactly the same method as Mr. Charles has adopted I have found the epitaph yielding—"Grewgious," "Twinkleton," "Durdles," "Tope," "Helena Landless," "Neville," and others—in fact, every name (except Buzzard's) can be drawn forth as required. If, then, Mr. Charles thinks that the Sapsea epitaph was cryptogrammatic he is sadly mistaken. A cryptogram must be regular, sequential, the letters (or keys) appearing at definite intervals and following a set order of progression. There must be only one solution, not half-a-dozen. The epitaph does not fulfil these conditions, and therefore it is not a cryptogram.

But fancy Dickens ever dealing in a cryptogram at all—the man who jibed at "Bill Stumps his Mark" actually engaging seriously in the same sort of hotch-potch! Surely it is not a Dickensian who suggests this thing. I can imagine nothing more foreign to Dickens's feelings than the inclusion of any sort of word-jumble or cipher in his works. Besides, what a fearfully clumsy and illogical arrangement this epitaph-clue would be—an epitaph written *before* the Drood murder, and yet purporting to supply a clue to the subsequent event! In the realms of topsy-turveydom was there ever such a violation of reason as this? Finally, the involving of the supernatural element in the drama is altogether illegitimate and opposed to the whole nature of Dickens's thesis. Mr. Charles's trump-card turns out, I think, to be both of the wrong suit and the lowest value, and I hope good Dickensians will give no heed to it.

So far as the Bazzard-Datchery theory goes it is very interesting. It doubly interests me because I see, now that it is set forth with such meticulous detail, how much less the evidence to support it is than that which can be adduced to support Helena Landless.

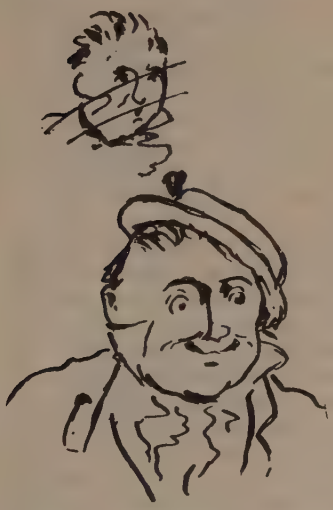
CHARACTER PORTRAITS FROM DICKENS

WE have received from Messrs. Chatto & Windus a copy of "Character Portraits from Dickens," selected and arranged by Charles Welsh (3s. 6d.). It is a compilation of some interest, and may serve some purpose to students of Dickens for reference purposes. About 150 characters have been selected, and are given in alphabetical order. Each is introduced with a few lines briefly explaining the part he plays in the book in which he appears, and then follows Dickens's own description of the character. Finally, reference is given to every chapter in the book in which the character appears. Of course it would be impossible to deal with many of Dickens's characters in this way, and the compiler explains that his main idea has been to present those descriptions of individuals who are the most vivid and concise in direct description rather than those which reveal their characters in conversation or in their actions only. At the end of the book is given a complete list of the characters so dealt with, classified according to their occupations. The volume is well "got up," and contains a frontispiece portrait of the novelist.

CHARLES DICKENS AS AN ARTIST *

By CLARENCE BOSWELL

THE story (heard from my father's own lips, for at least twenty times) of a memorable visit made by him to the home of Charles Dickens, shortly after the great master of English fiction had returned to his publishers the corrected proofs of *David Copperfield*, requires but little mental effort on my part to re-narrate. The incidents of the event alluded to have always made me feel a certain comradeship for the Dickens of my father's description—the Dickens of the fireside, jovial almost to boyishness, with now and then a strain of sadness in speech and manner which disclosed the strangely contrasting sides of his strenuous personality. After the lapse of nearly half a century, the picture of that long, happy evening passed by my father in the companionship of the world's greatest tale-teller, seemed to stand out



MR. DICK

DAVID COPPERFIELD

amid the multitudinous experiences of my parent, like a star of the first magnitude among luminaries of lesser effulgence.

It was on the evening of November 22nd, 1849, that my father (now six months dead) wended his way from his humble lodgings in Moulton Street to Devonshire Terrace, at that time the home of Dickens. The hour was unusually early for making an evening call when my father found himself before the house of the novelist, but his youthful enthusiasm (my father fairly worshipped Dickens) had gotten the upper hand of his sense of social propriety. He had looked forward to this meeting between himself and England's foremost literary hero with the customary trepidation of the devotee who

* From "The Black Book." New York. 1905.

goes to pay homage at the shrine of his favourite deity. To make matters less promising, my father's visit had not been requested by Dickens—indeed, the latter had scarcely a knowledge of his existence. My father, however, was emboldened in his purpose by the fact that he was going to Dickens's home armed with a letter of introduction from the novelist's warmest friend, John Forster.

Arriving at Devonshire Terrace, my father was ushered into the large but sparsely furnished drawing-room of the Dickens household. The apartment was littered about with papers and books. To the extreme joy of the young literary pilgrim, he was informed that Dickens was at home and was at that moment dining with the members of his family. During the brief time my father was kept waiting, an excellent opportunity was afforded him for observing the details of the barren drawing-room. It was while taking a mental inventory of the objects around him, that my father's ear caught the sound of approaching footsteps in the hallway. In another minute Dickens had entered the room, and after a cordial greeting, the great writer glanced over Forster's note of introduction, and remarking that he was more than pleased to meet a young man who had travelled over 3,000 miles to talk with him, Dickens invited my father into what the novelist was pleased to call his "den." It was not a very large room, but it presented an air of privacy and cosiness that somewhat prepared my father for the royal evening before him. Scarcely before my father realized his good fortune, Dickens was deep in an explanation of the characters of that inimitable and immortal work of art, *David Copperfield*.

As the evening wore away, the creator of the renowned "Pickwick" told of his wretched boyhood, his early literary aspirations, his disappointments in disposing of his youthful productions, and his present difficulties in drawing a lucid picture with words of the characters that lay in his brain. It was with special tenderness that he reverted to *David Copperfield*, which, published in parts, was already popular. He said that but few departures had been made from the original writing. He spoke of the real regret he had felt in putting from him the book that is to-day his acknowledged masterpiece. It was wholly a labour of love, this book, and more than a few facts out of his own personal experience were woven into the life of little David. Dickens, in words of considerable warmth, avowed that *Copperfield* was the child of his deepest affection; the one book into the making of which he had put his own life's blood.

As his interest in the conversation deepened, Dickens lifted from his desk the quill pen with which he had written the greatest of his works, and roughly sketched the figures of "David," "Micawber," "Mrs. Micawber," "Uriah Heep," and the other strong characters we all have learned to love or hate as if they were living personages. "It was curious," my father was wont to remark, "to watch the man talking and sketching, wholly absorbed in the people of his own making, and limning their forms and features with a few crude, but at the same time, lucid lines." Plainly, Dickens for a time was unconscious of his audience, and was "fighting his battles o'er again."

It was close upon midnight when my father took his departure from Devonshire Terrace, flushed with the excitement of his remark-

MR. PEGGOTTY

MR. MICAWBER

URIAH HEEP

MRS. MICAWBER

able séance with the great writer, and bearing with him, as souvenirs of the occasion, six of the hasty drawings made by the ready hand of Charles Dickens. These same sketches are now given to the world for the first time in these pages, and while no one will claim for them an intrinsic art value, they none the less must needs be interesting to everyone who has shed quiet tears over the death of little Nell, laughed at the strong, rich humour of Mr. Pickwick and Sam Weller, and sympathised with the woes of Mrs. Gummidge.

THE IDEA OF FRIENDSHIP

AS REVEALED IN THE WORKS OF DICKENS

By HELEN ROBERTS (of the Sheffield Branch)

II

ANOTHER amusing friendship is that between Dick Swiveller and the Marchioness. Dick's drooping spirits are soon revived in feeding the poor hungry child, witnessing her delight over the "early purl" and initiating her in the mysteries of the game of cribbage, the subsequent self-devotion of the little creature in nursing Dick alone through what she calls "three long, slow weeks" is described with infinite charm. Naturally Dick proves not ungrateful; he educates and provides for the poor little marchioness, finally marries her, and "they play many hundred thousand games of cribbage together, and live happy ever after."

A very strange friendship is that in *Hard Times* between Louisa Gradgrind and Sissy Jupe. Dickens has given us a very strange character in Louisa, fascinating almost in its exclusive reserve, its impassive stoicism. And this hard, brilliant nature, which at first coldly repulses the gentle and affectionate overtures of the kind-hearted Sissy, is glad to welcome them when disillusioned, distraught and hopeless, everything in the world for her turns to dust and ashes. Then she can bear no other presence near her, will receive no service that is not rendered by the loving ministry of the poor circus girl.

A very striking contrast to the character of Louisa is that of Esther Summerson in *Bleak House*. She is, indeed, one of Dickens's noblest characters, and the friendship that existed between Esther and Ada Clare is one of the most beautiful of all those Dickens has given us. All through the book this friendship runs like a thread of gold, and not the least beautiful passage is that which describes Esther lying in the clutches of a loathsome disease, holding through pain and unconsciousness the one idea, the one plea—that the door might be barred to keep out the friend for whose presence she longed—but whose pitiful appeals were denied, lest *she* should fall a victim to the same fell disease.

Then how many of us would like to have such a pair of friends as had Martin Chuzzlewit in Tom Pinch and Mark Tapley? Martin's very character is influenced by them; we find him in the opening chapters self-willed, obdurate, proud and selfish, but when he is homeless and destitute he finds Tom's one gold coin left for

him in such a manner that he cannot refuse it, and Mark comes to him and offers his cheerful services and companionship without any hope of a material reward. They start for America, and during the voyage Mark's useful and cheery kind-heartedness is in striking contrast to the selfish apathy of Martin. When full of brave ambition and hope they reach the dismal marsh and swamp which they have been deluded into buying, Martin's courage breaks down, but not Mark Tapley's. He comforts and sustains his friend, and, when he succumbs to the deadly malarial vapours, works for him all day and watches him all night, worn with hard living and the unaccustomed toil of a new life, surrounded by dismal and discouraging circumstances of every kind, never complaining or yielding in the least degree. If ever he had thought Martin selfish or inconsiderate he then forgot it all, never once blamed him for their desperate fortunes, remembered nothing but the better qualities of his fellow-wanderer, and was devoted to him heart and hand.

One other of Dickens's characters owes its nobility to the hand of friendship stretched out to lift it from the mire of degradation. He describes the wild night, when Sydney Carton, debauched and dissipated, slinks stealthily and unsteadily to the dingy room, where he has to work till dawn: the dim, dark river, the dull, overcast sky, the whole scene like a lifeless desert, waste forces within him and desert all around, this man, who has lost even that last remnant of fallen human nature—self-respect—sees lying in the wilderness before him only a mirage of honourable ambition, self-denial and perseverance. By the touch of a magic pen we are shown that there is no sadder sight than the man of good abilities and good emotions, incapable of their directed exercise, incapable of his own help and his own happiness, sensible of the blight on him, and resigning himself to let it eat him away. But that is changed! The hand of friendship draws him from the slough of despair, even though at first he feels himself helpless and hopeless. He knows that Lucie Manette can give him nothing more than friendship, yet the knowledge that she can give him even that, that she pities him, and believes him capable of better things, awakens in him unformed ideas of striving afresh, beginning anew, shaking off sloth and sensuality and fighting out an abandoned fight. When he realises that he can serve her and those dear to her, his reckless defiance falls from him, and steadily and thoroughly he devotes himself to her service, he works day and night to effect his ends, nothing is forgotten; every detail that will ensure the success of his scheme of self-sacrifice is carried out with a quickness and skill that does not even allow those around to guess his purpose. And when this purpose is achieved, when he stands for execution in the place of Evremonde—Lucie's husband—it is with a prayer for a merciful consideration for all his poor blindnesses and errors that he peacefully, almost gladly, gives his life for his friend, and goes to the far, far better rest than he had ever known.

(Concluded.)

THE BOZ CLUB DINNER

AT the annual dinner of the Boz Club, which was held on the evening of February 7th, Sir Edward Clarke, K.C., presided over a large gathering, which included Lord Alverstone, Sir Chas. and Lady Mathews, Sir John and Lady Hare, Sir Luke and Lady Fildes, Canon and Mrs. Benham, the Hon. Spencer Lyttelton, Mr. Henry F. Dickens, K.C., and Mrs. Dickens, Miss Georgina Hogarth, the Misses Olive and Elaine Dickens, Mr. Harry Furniss, Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Perugini, Mr. J. C. Parkinson, Mr. M. H. Spielmann, Mr. and Mrs. W. W. Jacobs, Mr. H. S. Ward, and Mr. J. W. T. Ley.

There were only two toasts—"The Immortal Memory of Charles Dickens," proposed by the Chairman, and "The Chairman," proposed by Capt. Robert Marshall.

Sir Edward Clarke, in the course of a delightful speech, said he intended to offer no eulogium on Dickens, for it would be unnecessary and inadequate. They were there as a tribute to the memory of a great and illustrious Englishman whose memory all the world honoured. It had been said that books were living things, and no writings brought that truth home more thoroughly than the works of Dickens. They aroused a sense of companionship that no other writer's books aroused. It had been wondered that Dickens resisted all temptations to enter political life, and he wondered at it, too. There was no exhilaration like that created in a man by the knowledge that he could sway a big audience, that hundreds were hanging on his every word; and that delight once tasted, it was very difficult to resist the temptation to repeat it. Therefore it was surprising that Dickens did not enter political life. But the truth was that he was too great a man to be harnessed to any political party; and he had done more good than he could have done as a politician. Sir Edward recalled the decade beginning with the year 1850, when Dickens was at the magic age of 37, which marked the fulness of his power. Around him there was a remarkable group of brilliant men. Tennyson was 40 years old, Thackeray 39, Browning 39, Charles Reade 35, Anthony Trollope 34, and Ruskin and Kingsley 31. The books published in that year showed a wealth of intellectual force. They included *Pendennis*, *David Copperfield*, *In Memoriam*, and *Alton Locke*. What a wonderful decade that was! English literature had never had such a brilliant period, and might wait long for its equal. For Dickens, it was a decade to begin with *David Copperfield*, and ended with what Sir Edward Clarke would always believe to be his greatest work, *A Tale of Two Cities*. Sir Edward said that it had been urged that Dickens created no heroes. It was probably true, but then Sir Edward had never met a hero in real life. As a fact, Dickens had found a hero in every man. (Applause.)

During the evening a series of quartettes were sung by gentlemen of St. George's Chapel, Windsor. The pieces included several selections from "The Village Quartettes," the music having been specially composed for the occasion, and ended with Sam Weller's song, "Bold Turpin." A handsome valuable souvenir was presented to every guest, containing facsimiles of the cover designs to the original monthly parts of Dickens's works.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ILLUSTRATORS OF DICKENS

SIR,—A few months since, an article respecting a proposal to raise a National Dickens Library Fund appeared in the *Daily Telegraph*. The writer mentions that the works of Dickens "have been illustrated with varying degrees of success, from Cruikshank down to Mr. Harry Furniss, Mr. Phil May, and Mr. Charles Dana Gibson." Will you kindly tell me which of the novels were illustrated by Mr. Phil May and Mr. Dana Gibson, and by whom published?

Yours faithfully, R. W. D.

ANACHRONISMS IN PICKWICK.

SIR,—In Chapter I. of the *Pickwick Papers* Mr. Pickwick, in his oration at the Pickwick Club, is reported by the Secretary to have said: "The praise of mankind was his Swing; philanthropy was his insurance office."

In "Pickwick Abroad; or, The Tour in France," by George W. M. Reynolds (a notice of which appears on page 291 of Volume I. of *The Dickensian*), the author states, at page 54 of the 1839 edition, referring to the *Pickwick Papers*, and writing in the name of Mr. Pickwick, as follows:—"Was a quarter of an hour too early for my breakfast, so took up the biography of myself and friends, and glanced cursorily over the notes which I have prepared for my editor, 'Boz.' Found that in 1827 I had made Mr. Jingle declare himself to have written a poem on the French Revolution, which only took place in 1830. Could not mean the first Revolution, as Mr. Jingle was present (according to my notes) at the one of which he wrote, and he was not born when the first began. Must think of this; there is a grievous error somewhere.

"Discovered another error. In the *memoranda* of a speech which I made on the night before my first sally-forth in search of adventures in 1827, I am represented to have said that 'philanthropy was my Swing!' Now the incendiary Swing—the fabled illuminator of all the haystacks in the kingdom—had not then acquired his name, nor was he known. Must correct this error also;" and he adds a footnote, "We are sorry to find that Mr. Pickwick omitted these necessary corrections, and that his editor, 'Boz,' has unaccountably suffered them to remain."

Dickens, of course, laughingly apologised for the prophetic force of Mr. Jingle's imagination, but I am not aware that the other alleged error has ever been commented upon.

Perhaps some of your readers might be able to throw some light on the origin of the phrase.

Yours faithfully,

British Linen Bank, Irvine. ARNOLD F. MCJANNET.

EAT-AN-SWILL AND EAT-ON-SOK(E)-ON

SIR,—Although the author of *Pickwick* frankly acknowledges that "up to the period of his being first immersed in the voluminous papers of the world-known club, he had never heard of Eatanswill, and with equal candour admits that he had in vain searched for proof of the actual existence of such a place," who can doubt that not only had the place an identity, but the name an origin in some real township which Dickens had seen in his travels?

I remember cycling for the first time down the Great North Road, which Dickens knew so well and described in more than one of his works, and when passing a huge sign-post which bore the single word "Eatonsokon"

it flashed into my mind that this identical sign-post, seen from the top of the mail coach, probably gave Dickens the idea for the name which he immortalised in Eatanswill, for has he not in "The Holly Tree" described the Great North Road in a snowstorm, and his wintry journey on the stage coach of which he was the solitary passenger? Cavillers may suggest that the position of Eatonsokon is not compatible with the route taken by the Pickwickians in their eastern counties tour. I do not propose to detract from the claims of Sudbury so ably summed up in the *Daily News* some months ago by Judge Willis. It is only the name I am concerned with; its quaintness is just what would strike him, and it was put away for after use in exactly the same way, as were the long categories of remarkable surnames found among Dickens's notes and quoted by Forster.

We are therefore led to believe, again to quote from *Pickwick*, that Mr. Pickwick, "with that anxious desire to abstain from giving offence to any, purposely substituted a fictitious designation for the real name of the place in which his observations were made." Yes! a fictitious name, but founded on fact, and the name 55½ miles down the Great North Road was, by a swing eastward of the compass, carried to a place almost equidistant from London (Sudbury is 54½ miles away). Mr. Editor, what sayest thou?

Yours faithfully, J. Y. W.

THE CHRISTMAS NUMBERS OF "ALL THE YEAR ROUND"

Dear Sir,—The information regarding the authorship of the various chapters in the reprints of the Christmas number of *All the Year Round* was supplied to us on the authority of the late F. G. Kitton, who had access to the file copy of that journal, on the margins of which was written the name of the writer of each story and article contained in its pages. It may therefore be taken that the table of contents to *No Thoroughfare*, as now given, is the correct one.

"Holme Lee," being the name by which Harriett Parr was better known as a writer of stories, was placed first, although, technically speaking, it probably is erroneous. As Hesba Stretton's real name was not familiar in connection with her books it did not occur to us to give it, even had it been known to us, and had we referred to the three authorities Mr. Pierpoint quotes, we certainly should have been at a loss which to choose—Sarah or Hannah Smith.

The information which Mr. Pierpoint supplies about the author of "The Valley of a Hundred Fires" is extremely interesting and valuable, and we are obliged to him for it. We did search in Allibone and other dictionaries for the name of the author of this story, but were unable to discover it. Curiously we were the publishers of "The Queen of the County" and "Margaret and her Bridesmaids," but unfortunately no records relating to the business transactions regarding these two books exist with us to-day.

We thank Mr. Pierpoint for his appreciative note concerning the little volumes.

Yours faithfully,

Chapman & Hall.

"OUR MUTUAL FRIEND"

Sir,—Referring to the letter in the February number of *The Dickensian*, the phrase is used by Dickens in *Pickwick Papers*, Chapter XXXIX. "If I am present at the meeting, *a mutual friend*, who is old enough to be the father of both parties, the voice of calumny can never be raised against her hereafter."

Yours faithfully,

6, Bute Mansions, Glasgow, W. John D. Parker.

"WELLERISMS" IN SCOTT

SIR,—Here is another. Michael Lambourne in *Kenilworth* says: "The hope of bettering myself, to be sure, as the old woman said when she leapt over the bridge at Kingston."

I dare say many more could be also found elsewhere.

Yours faithfully,

Seend. ARTHUR SCHOMBERG.

THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP

HERE, THERE, AND EVERYWHERE

NOTICE TO SECRETARIES.

Reports of meetings should reach the Editor by the 18th of each month to ensure insertion. But it will be a matter of GREAT CONVENIENCE *if Secretaries will send their reports immediately after the meetings have been held, and not wait until the time limit before forwarding them.*—THE EDITOR.

LONDON.—The ninety-sixth anniversary of the birth of Charles Dickens was celebrated by headquarters at a meeting at Essex Hall, Strand, on February 8th. Mr. Henry F. Dickens, K.C., occupied the chair, and amongst the numerous audience were also Miss Hogarth, Mrs. Henry F. Dickens, Miss Olive Dickens, Miss Elaine Dickens, Mr. Francesco Berger, and Mr. H. Snowden Ward.

In the course of his presidential address Mr. Henry F. Dickens reviewed the work of the Fellowship and its branches during the past year, and spoke of the establishment of a perpetual memorial at the Guildhall. He referred with especial feeling to the good work of the Charitable and Needlework Guild in connection with their "Betty Higden" scheme, which had already assured to one old lady an independence that would keep her from the much-dreaded workhouse.

In reviewing the work that had been accomplished, Mr. Dickens emphasised the fact that the Dickens Fellowship must always be regarded as a whole and never as individual societies working in different centres, and expressed the firm belief that the action of the last conference in fixing the minimum subscription for those members who were not members of branches, at half a crown instead of one shilling as formerly, was a step in the right direction, and would be for the general good of the whole of the Fellowship. In conclusion Mr. Dickens added that the whole duty of membership did not end in paying the subscription: that was only the commencement, and members, amongst other obligations, should lose no opportunity of enlisting fresh recruits to swell the ranks.

Addresses followed by Mr. Snowden Ward, who referred at length to the completion of the National Dickens Library scheme, and by Mr. Francesco Berger, the intimate friend of Dickens, who composed the music for more than one of the notable private theatrical productions which Dickens stage managed. Mr. Berger narrated how a short time since he had heard a great tribute paid to the master by one of his countrymen: in the romantic age of youth, the novelist whose works were greedily devoured was Scott: in the ripest years of life Shakespeare most satisfield the cravings, but it remained to Dickens to provide the books that were to be read throughout the whole of one's life.

During the evening Mr. Ernest Wellbeloved and friends gave some capital recitations, and Mr. Willoughby Matchett moved the audience to peals of laughter with a very clever skit upon the much-discussed Drood Mystery, the latest adaptation and the many attempts to solve

the mystery. He called it "The Mister-Tree of Edwin Drood: a New Christmas Carr-ol," and it was a travesty full of wit and humour.

CHARITABLE AND NEEDLEWORK GUILD.—Tickets for the bazaar to be held on March 27th at St. Bride's Institute, Bride Lane, E.C., in aid of our Guild funds, are now ready, and may be obtained from the Guild secretary, Miss E. M. Miniken, or from Mr. J. W. T. Ley, hon. general secretary, at Headquarters. Those admitting to the opening are as usual 1s., after 7 p.m. 6d. The Rev. Canon Benham will take the chair at 3 p.m., and will be supported by our president, Miss Georgina Hogarth; Mrs. Henry F. Dickens, vice-president; Miss Elaine Dickens, Miss Olive Dickens, and others. During the afternoon the well-known Dickens sketch artistes, Mr. and Mrs. Ed. W. Lucas, have kindly promised to give character sketches from *Martin Chuzzlewit* and *The Old Curiosity Shop*, while a mysterious party, known as the "Fellowship's Foolish Follies," will give a representation of some of their "Funny Frolics" in the evening. Other attractions will be a Dickens exhibition of great interest; competitions for ladies and gentlemen; songs, recitations and instrumental music by members, &c. The committee hopes that the function will be heartily supported. Gifts of any description will be gratefully received, but should be forwarded not earlier than March 22nd, well packed, carriage paid, and addressed to Miss Miniken, c/o Housekeeper, Dickens Fellowship, Charitable and Needlework Guild, St. Bride's Institute, Bride Lane, Fleet Street, E.C.

BIRMINGHAM.—The January meeting was held at the Dale End Association Room on the 10th, the evening being devoted to a discussion on *Bleak House*. Mr. E. F. Braham occupied the chair. Mr. Wilkes led with a paper dealing with the minor characters. Mrs. Stebbings gave an excellent, dramatic reading of the interview between Lady Deadlock and the mother of the accused murderer. Mr. Bernard Porter read a paper on "Chancery Law and Lawyers," and subsequent speakers, in the discussion which followed, were Mr. G. W. Davis, Mr. F. Yoxall, Mrs. Yoxall, Mr. Mabberley, and Mr. J. J. Button.

BLACKHEATH, LEE AND LEWISHAM.—At the January meeting Mr. J. W. T. Ley read two papers, "Dickens as a Social Reformer" and "Betty Higden," the latter having been contributed by Miss E. M. Minniken. In his paper Mr. Ley dwelt upon Dickens's huge sympathy with the poor, his keen sense of justice, which, coupled with his sense of humour, enabled him to detect abuses, and the strong appeal he makes to the heart of his readers. Though Dickens did not formulate any political theory of reform, he was a social reformer in the truest sense of the word. In her paper Miss Miniken presented a word picture of Betty Higden, one of Dickens most lovable and pathetic figures. All her love, her pride, her horror of the workhouse were expressed in appealing terms. A general discussion followed, which ran quite high.

The Old Folks Dinner took place on Friday, January 24th, and was under the management of Miss Sayers, hon. secretary of Ladies' Needlework Party, assisted by Mrs. Pett and Mrs. Curd. About 100 old people had dinners at the Shrubbery Road Schools, and about 50 dinners were fetched. The old people present appeared to enjoy the evening immensely, as indeed did the helpers. At the end of the dinner a large number of members and friends entertained the old folk with songs and recitations.

BRIGHTON.—The "Birthday Celebration" was held at Steine House on the 8th February, when Mr. Henry Davey presided over a large attendance. Mr. Bristow read a paper on "The Faith of Charles Dickens." Mr. Henry Davey discoursed on the various travels undertaken by Charles Dickens, and gave many varied and interesting incidents in such travels,

especially in the localities of America and Italy. Mr. W. F. Fowler submitted a dissertation on the general effect the novels of Dickens had on literature in general. Mr. Francis J. Gauntlett gave a couple of recitations from *Edwin Drood* and *Barnaby Rudge*.

BRIXTON.—An excellent evening's entertainment was provided by Mr. R. J. Block on 20th January at Brixton Independent Church Rooms. Mr. Sidney Marriott occupied the chair, and directed, amongst other matters, special attention to the re-established *Little Dorrit* section of the branch. Mr. Block gave his reading of "Mrs. Lirriper's Reminiscences," and how satisfactorily he acquitted himself, the applause of the large audience assembled, repeatedly attested. His characteristic representations of the various personalities surrounding the dear old lady were vividly realistic, and the branch has never heard Mr. Block in better form. On February 11th, at the Lecture Hall, Mr. W. Miles, F.R.S.L., gave a reading and recitals from Dickens. The programme comprised one hour's reading from *The Old Curiosity Shop*, which was delivered with power and pathos. In the second part, Pickwickian recitals. By request, Mr. Miles also recited "The Knight and the Lady," from the "Ingoldsby Legends." Mr. Miles is an old favourite at Brixton. He is a past master of elocution, always dealing with Dickensian themes *con amore*, and fully commanding the delighted interest of his auditors.

DUBLIN.—In addition to the ordinary social gatherings held during the month, the Dublin Branch celebrated the birthday of Dickens by a conversazione held in the Sackville Café on Friday, February 7th. A badge competition was the principal item in the evening's entertainment, and created much enthusiasm. The adjudicating having been completed, a most interesting programme was entered upon, which included sketches by the Misses Hogg, and Misses Slyme and Hunt, and Messrs. Huish and Preston, also readings by Miss Gibbons and Mr. Prescott. The vocal items contributed by Miss Tyndall and Miss Graham were warmly applauded. After some very appropriate remarks by Mr. Huish, who filled the double *rôle* of chairman and actor, the members separated, having spent a most enjoyable evening.

FOREST GATE.—The meeting on February 12th was an unqualified success. It was "Members" night, and sixteen members took part in the proceedings. The chief item on the programme was a sketch, "Mrs. Quilp's Tea Party." The characters in it were splendidly sustained by Miss L. Barton, Miss E. Barton, Miss Niedermann, Miss Swan, Mrs. Edson and Mr. Truscott. Each part was acted with skill, but chief honours went to Miss L. Barton, whose impersonation of "Mrs. George" was a revelation to the audience. The singing of Miss F. Dickinson, Miss L. Deighton, and Messrs. Beal, Beardmore, Cuttle and Graham was highly appreciated. Mrs. Burdett recited "The Lifeboat"; Mr. Herbert, the chairman, gave a reading, as did also Mrs. Gordon, and the hon. secretary read a paper on "The Similes of *Great Expectations*." Miss Edna Freeman was accompanist, and played a pianoforte solo.

GLOUCESTER.—The monthly meeting was held at Northgate Mansions, the President (Mr. H. Godwin Chance) presiding over a large attendance. The Mayor (Mr. F. H. Bretherton) gave a reading from *Martin Chuzzlewit*, choosing the description of Sairey Gamp's visit to Mr. and Mrs. Mould. This was followed by a reading by Mr. Juckes, who was accompanied by a visitor from the Birmingham Branch of the Fellowship. Mr. Juckes' reading was "the final appearance of Mrs. Betsy Prig." Mr. H. W. Bruton read a most interesting paper on the bibliography of *Martin Chuzzlewit*. This raised a discussion.

HASTINGS.—On the 28th January, under the auspices of the branch,

Mr. Frank Speaight gave his now famous rendering of *The Pickwick Papers* at the Public Hall. Major Vipan, D.S.O., presided, and the audience was kept in hearty peals of laughter from start to finish. During the evening Miss Beatrice Root sang two songs.

HULL.—There was a large gathering at the Shakespeare Hall on January 10th to hear Miss A. Hall's paper on "Dickens's Exaggeration," which was full of humour, and at the close an interesting discussion ensued, in which Messrs. Dibb, Noble, Petty, Waterfall, Eastman, and Mrs. Holdsworth took part.

LIVERPOOL.—On January 14th, the Fellowship gave a hot pot supper to upwards of 220 poor children from one of the poorest districts of the city. An entertainment followed, and toys and fruit were distributed among the children on leaving. A numerous willing band of helpers, under the leadership of Mrs. Bell, worked very hard. The following Saturday a cinderella dance took place, and was voted the greatest social success the branch has had.

Tuesday, January 21st, was a members' night, and most interesting papers were given by the following:—Miss Bartlett on "The Power of the Novel"; Miss Lloyd on "Reading"; Mr. Bayliss on *Edwin Drood*, and the Secretary on "Miracles and the Miraculous." Proceedings closed with a vote of thanks to the chairman, Mr. Edgar Browne, F.R.C.S., the worthy president. On February 4th Professor Strong delivered a lecture on "Humour." After pointing out that humour depended on an appreciation of contrasts, and on environment, he proceeded to entertain the audience to various stories typical of English, Scotch and Irish humour. The lecturer concluded by drawing a contrast between the humour of Dickens and Thackeray, and paid a tribute to the genius of the former. The president, Mr. Edgar Browne, F.R.C.S., was in the chair.

LUDDENDEN.—The first meeting for 1908 was held on January 28th. Mr. H. M. Greenwood (the president) was in the chair. The leader for the evening was Miss Lizzie Yates, who dealt with the subject, "The Death of Little Nell." Miss Yates, dressed as Nell's grandfather, recited the pitiful soliloquy of the old man before and after he leaves the dead child, and the character was portrayed realistically. She sustained the interest to the end, and was greeted with well-deserved applause. Next she read a short paper on the subject, and pointed out the tenderness which Dickens embodied in the descriptions of the deaths of his characters. She drew several apt lessons from Little Nell's life, calling her a "kindly evangel," and one who left an influence of love behind her. Criticisms, not of the paper, but of the subject, were added by Messrs. H. M. Greenwood, J. Schofield, F. Beken, and W. Alderson.

MAIDSTONE.—This branch opened their season with a very successful evening last month, when through some energetic work, the members secured a large attendance at the Corn Exchange to listen to a Pickwickian recital by Mr. Frank Speaight. The Mayor (Mr. B. P. Boorman) presided, and, in introducing the reciter, spoke in general terms of the influence of Dickens to-day. Mr. Speaight astonished his hearers with his marvellous memory, holding their attention and evoking their enthusiasm for over two hours. There is every indication that this branch will go ahead and make itself worthy of the county which fascinated the novelist so much.

MANCHESTER.—At the meeting held on Friday, January 10th, Mr. Joseph Smith presiding, a very interesting paper was read by Mrs. Laurence Clay on "Charles Dickens's Literary Children," interspersed with several recitals, which were greatly appreciated. The birthday cele-

bration on February 7th took the form of an entertainment in aid of the funds of the Manchester Crimean and Indian Mutiny Veterans' Association. The programme included songs by Miss Heyworth, and a series of admirable character sketches, from the works of Dickens, given by Mr. S. Langton Johnson, of London. Sir William Bailey presided, and in the course of his address referred to the military characters to be found in the works of Charles Dickens. Among those who also took part in the proceedings were Captain Hobbs, Mr. Albert Nicholson and Mr. J. T. Robson, of the Dublin Branch, who received a very hearty welcome.

PHILADELPHIA, U.S.A.—This branch has held its regular monthly meetings at the Widener Library building, with good attendance. The following essays have been presented:—"Dickens in Every-day Life," by Mrs. Woodward; "Dickens's Boys, from a Boy's Standpoint," by Master L. D. Lippmann; "Charles Dickens as a Nature Faker," by Dr. Henry Leffmann. Reading from the writings of Dickens have been given by Mrs. Coombs, Mrs. Wager-Smith, Mr. J. K. Thompson, and Mr. L. M. Hodges.

At the stated meeting in January, Mr. W. H. Hart read "A Letter and Visit from Mr. Micawber," consisting in part of some observations on the localities of the story and criticisms of Mr. Micawber's character, with selections from the account of his exposure of Heep. Sir Walter Sonneberg read an essay entitled "Dickens, the Reformer, and the Modern Hypocrite." Mr. Wilkins (a Pittsburg member) sent a paper entitled, "The Guild of Literature and Art," an account of an effort initiated by Dickens to found a fund for the assistance of deserving literary persons and artists.

At the birthday celebration on February 7th an excellent programme was submitted, including a recital of "The Ivy Green," by Miss Carolyn L. Sage, and two papers entitled respectively "The Lawyers of Dickensland," by Mr. J. M. Patterson, and "German Appreciation of Dickens," by Dr. Henry Leffmann. At this meeting new officers were elected. Dr. Henry Leffmann was chosen as president and Mr. J. K. Thompson as secretary.

PLYMOUTH.—This new and flourishing branch held its first meeting in the Bedford Hall, Bank Street, last month. Mr. W. H. K. Wright, president, who was in the chair, explained the purpose of the "Fellowship." Mr. Charles Quain, hon. secretary, who has done so much towards its establishment, gave an interesting sketch of the life of Dickens. Some personal reminiscences of Dickens were given by Mr. A. Budge, who had heard him give readings both in Exeter and London. Mr. C. W. Bracken, B.A., gave the well-known "Death of Little Paul"; Mr. Wright rendered a dramatic selection from "Dr. Marigold," and Mr. J. H. Belcher recounted Sam Weller and the Valentine. Some agreeable musical selections varied the programme, and were contributed by Madame Oxburgh, Mr. W. E. Searle, Miss Truran, Miss M. Hammond, and Mr. Kilpatrick also assisting. Mr. Quiller Couch, the well-known novelist, has joined the society, and, it is hoped, will accept the post of vice-president.

SHEFFIELD.—At the birthday celebration in the Cutlers' Hall on February 7th, about two hundred members were present. Mr. G. W. Parker occupied the chair. The proceeding opened with a dramatic reading from *Pickwick Papers*. Miss Senior officiated as scene-teller, and the various characters were represented by Mrs. T. H. Warskett, Mrs. W. H. Bagnall, the Misses L. H. Rhodes, and C. Senior, and Messrs. T. H. Warskett, C. W. and E. Darwin, T. W. Padmore, S. D. Gent, J. A. Howard, C. Everitt, L. E. V. B. Smythe, and J. R. Draper. Mrs. Warskett and Mr. C. Everitt gave a spirited sketch from *Pickwick*, in which the former impersonated Mrs. Bardell

and the latter Mr. Pickwick. Mrs. W. H. Bagnall recited "How Ruth Pinch made a Beefsteak Pudding," and Mr. C. Everitt gave character sketches of Sydney Carton and Uriah Heep. The programme concluded with a dramatic sketch, "The Murder of Nancy" *(Oliver Twist)*, Mr. C. Everitt impersonating Bill Sikes; Miss M. Everitt, Nancy; Mr. Sydney D. Gent, The Artful Dodger; and Mr. T. H. Warskett, Fagin.

SOUTHAMPTON.—A most enjoyable social evening took place on January 20th. Mr. E. Hughes gave two excellent recitations, and musical items were contributed by the Misses Levy, Campbell and Yadd, and by Master Bishop. The evening concluded with a dance.

The birthday celebration was arranged by Mr. Cheverton and consisted of an address on "Dombey and Son." Two musical items enlivened the proceedings.

TORONTO.—The December and January meetings were so largely attended as to tax the capacity of our new meeting place, the Theatre of the Normal School, which has seating accommodation for over 500. Vice-president F. M. Bell-Smith was to have been chairman at the December meeting, but owing to illness could not be present, and Mr. Bengough presided. The book of the evening was *Barnaby Rudge*. At the *Martin Chuzzlewit* meeting on 9th January, vice-president A. M. Denovan occupied the chair. Among those taking part in the programme were Rev. W. H. Hincks, Walter C. Cain, S. T. Church, Milton Lee, and the president, E. S. Williamson. It was announced that the Fellowship players had decided to enter the competition for the trophy offered by the Governor-General of Canada, and that to defray the expenses of sending the players to Ottawa, two additional performances of *The Cricket on the Hearth* were given in February.

YORK.—It is with great regret that we announce the death of Mr. George Medd, the founder and hon. secretary of this branch. Mr. Medd died suddenly on January 27th, and was buried on the 30th. Several members attended the funeral, and a very touching "In Memoriam" was attached to the wreath sent by the branch. Mr. Medd was highly esteemed by not only the members in York, but by those in London who have had the pleasure of meeting him on more than one occasion.

WEST LONDON.—On Thursday, January 30th, the branch held its monthly meeting. Captain Higginson presided. Over fifty members were present, and *The Chimes* was very effectively read by Miss Lilian Hughes, Mrs. Morris, Mr. Graves, and Miss G. Harries.

OTHER MEETINGS.

GLASGOW DICKENS SOCIETY.—This society celebrated the 96th anniversary of Dickens's birth on the 7th February in the Masonic Hall. Dr. Wm. Wallace, president of the society, took the chair. The chairman, in his opening remarks, spoke in general terms of the influence and popularity of Dickens. Mr. John S. Samuel then delivered an eloquent and sympathetic paper on "Charles Dickens: the Children's Friend," in the course of which he said that perhaps no novelist ever had a keener appreciation of the pathos of childhood than Dickens, or understood more fully how real and overwhelming were its sorrows. Principal MacAlister also spoke upon Dickens's schoolmasters.

MR. FRANK STAFF AS THE "ARTFUL DODGER."—The "incomparable Toots" and effective Sim Tappertit, which Mr. Frank Staff has recently given us in the Dramatic Society's productions of "The House of Dombey" and "Dolly Varden," have now a companion in an equally clever character study of the "Artful Dodger." Mr. Egerton Grey—the name by which Mr. Frank Staff was well known for several years when he toured the provinces as leading comedian in more than

one important production, has lately been appearing at the Camberwell Empire with Mr. Geo. M. Marriott's "Oliver Twist" Company, playing the Dodger at the special request of the manager. We need hardly say that "Egerton Grey" excelled himself, and played the part with a finesse that is seldom to be met with out of the "legitimate" stage—in fact, the whole company played with great faithfulness, Mr. Marriott's "Fagin" being a particularly clever study of the famous Jew.—M. H.

CRIPPLEGATE THEATRE.—On February 11th Mr. Fred T. Harry, who, it will be remembered, played Gabriel Varden in the recent performances given by the Dickens Fellowship Dramatic Society, gave his annual recital at the above theatre. The main feature of the programme consisted in an adaptation of *The Old Curiosity Shop*. Apart from a few slight defects the performance was an improvement on the *Martin Chuzzlewit* of last year.

The best acting was that of Mr. Harry, whose Quilp was an admirable representation, although he might with advantage have introduced a little more of repose into his acting, but these blemishes detracted but slightly from a very capable and realistic rendering. The acting all round compared favourably with that of most amateur performances. Special mention should be made of Miss Vera Grenville, who undertook the somewhat difficult task of "doubling" the parts of the Marchioness and Little Nell. The fault with several members of the cast was that the "atmosphere" was lacking from their performances.

The play was preceded by a sketch from *The Cricket on the Hearth*, in which Miss Grenville was the best as Bertha. Mr. Harry's Caleb was not as good as was his Quilp. J. W.

DICKENSIANA MONTH BY MONTH

BOOKS

Micellaneous Papers from "The Examiner," "Household Words" and "All the Year Round," Plays and Poems by Charles Dickens. 2 volumes with 20 illustrations. Introduction by B. W. Matz. In the "National" Edition. London: Chapman & Hall, Ltd.

MAGAZINE AND NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

"Dickens and Glasgow." *Glasgow Herald*, February 7.

"Varia" (Education, Squeers and Nicholas Nickleby). *Church Times*, January 31.

"If Oliver Twist were alive." *Daily Mail*, February 3.

"The Scene of the Drood Mystery: Cloisterham." By Walter Dexter. Illustrated. *The Bystander*, January 29.

"Charles Dickens and Canada." *Canada*, January 25.

"Cigarette Papers" (Ibsen and Dickens), *The People*, January 25, and (Opium Dens and Jasper), *The People*, January 20.

"The Mystery of Edwin Drood." By T. P. *P.T.O.*, January 25.

"The Great Drood Case." By Andrew Lang. *Morning Post*, January 24.

"A Night in Dickens-land." *Manchester Evening News*, January 17.

"Charles Dickens: His Visit to Aberdeen. *Aberdeen Express*, Feb. 11.

"Dickens in Chinese." *Evening Standard*, February 6.

"The Immortal Characters of Dickens." *The Queen*, February 8.

"Patronisers." *British Weekly*, February 6.

"Dickens and Doncaster." *Grand Magazine*, January.

"An Immortal Memory." *Bristol Times & Mirror*, February 8.

"The National Dickens Library: Presentation at the Guildhall." *Westminster Gazette, City Press, Daily News, Daily Chronicle, Morning Post, The Times, Daily Telegraph* (and leader), *Standard* (and leader), *Evening Standard, Daily Graphic* (and leader) illustrated, *Morning Advertiser, Manchester Guardian, Birmingham Post, Liverpool Post, Yorkshire*

Observer, *Birmingham Mail*, *Pall Mall Gazette*, February 8. *Sunday School Chronicle*, February 13. *The Graphic* (illus.), February 15.

"Hull's Early Plays of Dickens." By John Suddaby. *Hull News*, February 8, 15 and 22.

"Edwin Drood: a Theory." By Albert F. Fessenden. *Boston* (U.S.A.) *Evening Transcript*, February 7.

"Charles the Great." By W. H. Chesson. *Daily Chronicle*, Feb. 15.

"The Very Dickens." *Pall Mall Gazette*, February 15.

"A Feast for Dickensians." *Daily Graphic*, February 21.

"Some specimens of how Dickens' portrait was drawn." *Bystander*, February 21.

DIARY OF DICKENS MEETINGS

MARCH

2. Brixton Branch: Evening arranged by Mr. James Skeen.
3. Liverpool Branch: Debate by members at Royal Institute at 8.
4. Headquarters: Lecture on "New Dickens Writings," by Mr. B. W. Matz, at Essex Hall.
5. Edinburgh Branch: Lantern Lecture, "Bonnie Prince Charlie in the Highlands," by Mrs. Dr. Parrott, 5, Andrew's Square, at 8.
   Maidstone Branch: Evening arranged by Miss Cooper.
   Toronto Branch: "Dombey & Son."
6. Manchester Branch: "Dickens's Ideal of Womanhood," by Mr. J. Cuming Walters, at Onward Hall, at 7.30.
   Hull Branch: "Our Mutual Friend" Readings, &c., at Shakespeare Hall.
7. Brighton Branch: An evening with *Little Dorrit*, by the President, at Steine House, at 8.
11. Forest Gate Branch: Lantern Lecture, "A Chat about Dickens," by Mr. B. W. Matz. Chairman, Mr. J. W. T. Ley, at Earlham Hall.
    Shrewsbury Branch: Meeting at County Café, at 8.
    Bristol: "Dickensiana: Critical and Otherwise," by Mr. C. Andrews, at 20, Berkeley Square, at 8.
12. Rochester Branch: Social evening at the Bull Hotel, at 8.
13. Sheffield Branch: Social meeting at Cutlers' Hall, at 8.
16. Brixton Branch: Evening arranged by Mrs. Stuart and Miss E. Cooper.
    Southampton Branch: Readings by members at Mount Pleasant School, at 8.
17. Liverpool Branch: "Ethics and Dickens," by Rev. H. D. Roberts, at Royal Institute, at 8.
19. Edinburgh Branch: Papers and discussion on *Dombey and Son*, at 5, St. Andrew's Square, at 8.
20. Birmingham Branch: Debate on *Edwin Drood*, by Messrs. E. J. Timings and A. J. Webb, at 8.
    Hull Branch: "Dickens's American Studies," by Rev. J. G. Patton, at Shakespeare Hall, at 8.
23. Brixton Branch: Whist Drive at Raleigh Hall.
25. Shrewsbury Branch: Fortnightly meeting at County Café, at 8.
26. West London Branch: Monthly meeting at Municipal Building, Ealing, at 8.
    Blackheath Branch: "Dickensian Courtship," by Miss Edith Sayers, at Avenue House, Lewisham, at 8.
27. Stockport Branch: "Nomenclature and Dickens," by Mr. Pilkington, at Sunday School, at 8.
27. Charitable and Needlework Guild. Annual Bazaar at St. Bride's Institute at 3 o'clock. Admission 1s., after 7 o'clock 6d.
30. Brixton Branch: Readings by the Rev. A. Thurston Pain.

DROUET'S FARMING ESTABLISHMENT FOR PAUPER CHILDREN AT TOOTING. [*See page* 90.